

St John's

Prayers:

Dear Lord, give us a spirit of reconciliation so that all people may be one and live in peace and harmony., through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray for your healing touch for those who are sick at home or in hospital, and for their carers, among them:

Sick: Scott Bradley, Dawn Forey, Ruth Gillespie, Hanna Lebrato, Jack Mannix, Marion Mason and Sue Ralfe.

RIP: Derek Penberthy and Beryl Robinson.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

**Matthew and Jonny say
Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer each day
Join in [here](#).**

St John's Church Pew Sheet 6th September 2020

Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for individual prayer and services.

St John's Church is open for prayer:
10.30am-12.30pm each day

St John's Church is open for services:
9.30am Sundays
10.30am Wednesdays

Our online services will continue for the time being.

**Owe no one anything,
except to love one another,
for the one who loves another
has fulfilled the law.
Romans 13:8**

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

St John's

The Thirteenth Sunday After Trinity

Collect

Almighty God, you search us and know us: may we rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Ezekiel 33:7-11](#)

[Romans 13:8-14](#)

[Matthew 18:15-20](#)

Short Sermon by Frances Westcott, Licensed Lay Minister

There's so much in this reading but I'm going to concentrate on the first part.

I wonder how each of us reacts when we have been hurt or wronged in some way. Maybe in the heat of the moment, we might have a row with the person, then and there – which would probably have the effect of escalating the problem. Maybe you're the kind of person who keeps things locked away – you don't say anything, but the hurt continues to rankle. Or perhaps we express our hurt by telling our friends how unkind or unfair so-and-so has been but not saying anything to the person's face, just going behind his or her back. None of these is the best reaction. Jesus offers an alternative. He says, tackle the person head on, just the two of you on your own. That takes courage, of course. I think the British are particularly averse to confrontation - we'd much rather have a private moan.

Jesus often illustrates his points by a parable, giving a specific example of an event. Here the sin or bad behaviour is referred to only generally – we have to supply our own scenario so we have to imagine both serious and trivial situations. I like the fact that Jesus is concerned about both parties, the sinner and the person sinned against. He doesn't want any of us to go around feeling privately aggrieved but he is also concerned that the person who has done wrong is not

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publicly disgraced, humiliated or backed into a corner. If we act on Jesus' first suggestion and get a private apology, reconciliation can be achieved – you've won the person back and that is obviously the best outcome. If that first approach doesn't work, you may have to make another attempt, this time with witnesses. If the situation is so serious that it needs taking further, then you might need to involve the church authorities, perhaps Matthew, in the first instance. If that is unsuccessful, then there is no point in taking it any further. Jesus says: Put the whole matter out of your mind; ignore the person – treat him or her as a tax collector or Gentile though, as we know, Jesus was prepared to offer them friendship so even that is not closing the door. In his first letter to the Corinthians Chapter 6, Paul admonishes the congregation for taking fellow Christians to the civic courts. He says they should first be judged by the church though, he adds, taking anyone to court is a defeat. Why not be wronged? Why not be defrauded? Just put up with it. This echoes Jesus' attitude and the idea of a court case doesn't even enter Jesus' head.

Jesus doesn't suggest any punishment for the wrongdoer. He is more concerned that we, who are smarting with a sense of injustice, should be appeased. It doesn't make for harmony in the congregation if anyone continues to feel hard done by. I may be naïve or just out of the loop but I am not aware of any ongoing friction in St John's congregation. I hope I'm right and there isn't any. It's always sad to read of disputes in other churches between the incumbent and the churchwardens, for example, or the organist.

Jesus, as always, shows his understanding of human nature. He knows that churches are not full of saints who never do any wrong, so he offers practical ways of sorting things out, always with the aim of bringing peace, harmony and reconciliation. Wise suggestions and worth following. Amen.